

January 30, 2024

Honorable John A. Gibney, Jr.,
Senior United States District Judge
c/o
Joseph S. Camden, Assistant Federal Public Defender
701 E. Broad Street, Suite 3600
Richmond, Virginia 23219

RE: Reference Letter & Assignment Request: Roscoe Copeland

Your Honor, Judge John Gibney

My name is Keith Stallworth, a native Detroit living as a semi-retired professional in Florida. Professionally, I founded America's first African American-owned overhead and underground electric utility distribution construction, maintenance and power restoration company in 1992. I am Co-Founder and Chairman of the Black Caucus Foundation of Michigan, a 501c3 nonprofit dedicated to public policy research, advocacy and direct service since 1985.

Your honor as a husband of 20 years that has been blessed with four children and a wonderful life partner, at 67 years of age I am at a phase of reflection in my life. It is in the vein that I am respectfully writing this reference and consideration on behalf of Roscoe Copeland. I wish I had met Roscoe much sooner to help him avoid the pitfalls of impatience, allure of physical wealth and importantly crossing ethical lines of business. I am a living testament that "you can do well by doing good". But I too was once ignorant to the importance of not holding this as a foundational principle by which to live. My blind desire for what I perceived as success, false pride, arrogance and greed ultimately led to a series of poor choices which changed a Michigan House of Representative career trajectory aimed at a seat in the U.S. Congress to one that would be launched from a re-start after 6 months of home confinement.

I share this because while there is no excuse for poor choices, I understand that the unbridled desire of the ignorant to "merely be recognized" as successful can without conscious resistance test one's character and even ethical boundaries. Annually through programs I direct at the Black Caucus Foundation of Michigan more than 5,000 inner city youth are exposed to Life Skills Programming that seeks to provide the "resistance skills" necessary to avoid enticements to cheat, exploit, use illicit drugs, or participate in violence and crime. We strive to give our kids a moral character that reinforces a strong and positive self-image and love for their gifts and the community, regardless of circumstance.

I met Roscoe as an aspiring entrepreneur that was eager to learn about inner city real estate acquisition and sales, as well as home renovation. A program I created that would give families a chance to redeem property tax foreclosed properties after the program's renovation of the home needed socially conscious entrepreneurs interested in helping us with this 4,000-unit challenge. Roscoe was one of the dozens of people that showed up to assist with the program, but what was different about this young man was his eagerness to learn and assist without pay others on their projects. As he began to understand more and more that the strength of a privately owned business gives one the ability to do more and more nonprofit work, and that "real success" comes with the volume of lives you can positively affect, I saw his perspective on success change from one that like many ambitious inner city entrepreneurs is based on physical trappings to one that saw great value in community, and community leadership love, thanks, admiration and respect. I know he has come to realize that you not only can one do well by doing good, but importantly, you will always do well by doing good!

I am not sure of what his childhood was like, nor the character development foundation he had. But I do know he had a burning desire for success that obviously was not reinforced by a moral compass. While ignorance and environments are real factors they are not an excuse for smart people doing dumb or hurtful things. While I did not know him at the time his crimes were committed, I do know his current life has been in a direction of community contribution which undoubtably is a change. My ask your Honor is that after taking responsibility that you assign him for a period to work in one of our Life Skills Programs, I sincerely believe it will not only give him the positive mentorship "restart" he will need, but this real experience and resulting consequences is a message that will resonate with some of our young people.

With that in mind I ask for your grace and leniency.

Sincerely

KB Stallworth

Co-Founder & Chairman



www.michiganblackcaucus.org

Former Minority Leader & Public Policy Advisor Emeritus, Michigan Legislative Black Caucus
Cameroon Africa-African American Trade Ambassador - "The Regal Initiative"



www.investafrika.org

Founder & Chairman, Utility Services of America

"America's 1st African American-owned

Overhead & Underground Electric Distribution Contracting Holding Company"



www.utilityservicesofamerica.com

U.S. Department of Transportation & National Minority Supplier Development Council Certified Minority Business Enterprise



www.utilityservicesofamerica.net

Minority Supplier Development Council Certified Minority Business Enterprise



Co-Founder, Michigan African American Thought Leaders

Co-Founder, National Conference of African American Thought Leaders - State Action Council



www.NAATL.org

Co-Founder, Michigan Black Music Month & Black Music Scholarship Fund

Co-Founder, Michigan Construction Science Expo



www.constructionscienceexpo.com

Author, The African American Commerce Initiative

Creator, Best Value Supply Chain Policy

Creator, First Source Hiring Policy

Creator, Learn & Earn Workforce Development Policy

Founder, Advancing Detroit Career Technical Education - The Randolph Career Technical Education Modernization Initiative

Founder, Bridges to Entrepreneurship

Founder, Bridges to Home Ownership

Founder, Bridges to Work

Founder, Bridges to Capital

Founder, Bridges to Sobriety

Author, Detroit Energy Trades Pipeline Initiative - Pathways to Entry For Local & Diverse Workers

Creator, Michigan Minority Aggregate Supply System -MMASS